

Application No.: 10/612,631
Amdt dated: August 1, 2006
Reply to Office action of May 4, 2006

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph starting on page 8, line 19 and ending on page 9, line 6, with the following amended paragraph:

Referring to FIG. 2, there is ~~a shown~~ a perspective view of a suture clinch 100 in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention. Suture clinch 100 comprises a first interlocking member 110 and a second interlocking member 200 that operate to snap together to securely lock suture extensions 50, 60 in a desired location. More particularly, FIG. 2 illustrates the interlocking members 110, 200 as the interlocking members are fully compressed and locked together in a final condition. Two extensions of suture 50, 60 are seen to pass through the interlocking members 110, 200 from proximal ends 120, 220 to distal ends 140, 240 of the interlocking members 110, 200, respectively. The suture 50, 60 is trapped in a convoluted path and forced into portions of the interlocking members that prevent the suture 50, 60 from moving in any direction.

Please replace the Abstract on page 24 with the following amended Abstract:

~~The invention is directed to a~~ A suture clinch that may be placed upon suture extensions of a placed suture to securely lock the extensions in a desired location. The clinch operates to replace a tied knot and retain the suture in a fixed relationship with little or no damage to the suture itself. The clinch comprises a mating pair of interlocking members that restrict movements of the suture. The interlocking members may be placed upon the suture extensions from alongside the suture extensions and compressed to a first condition where the interlocking members may be advanced, retracted or adjusted, and subsequently further compressed to a second condition where the interlocking members are fully engaged to fully restrict the movement of the suture. In another aspect, the clinch may be provided in a flat form comprising a first component and a second component. The first and second components fit together in

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a mating relationship that entraps at least a portion of the suture between tractive faces of the first and second components, respectively. Each end of the first and second components may have a recessed central portion that leaves two extensions along the sides of each end of the components. The extensions of the second component are subsequently folded over the first component to provide secure entrapment of the suture between the tractive faces of the first and second components. The tractive faces operate to engage the suture and hold it securely in place without damaging or challenging the suture. The clinch may comprise of plastic, metallic materials such as stainless steel or titanium, or a combination of both where the plastic is chosen for its value as an atraumatic interface and the metal for its radiopacity or durability.